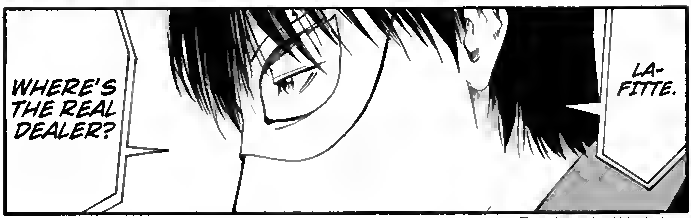
MangaBox

WRITER/TADASHI AGI ARTIST/SHUU OKIMOTO

MISSION 4 - CARD ILLUSION
HIS EYES ARE FIXED ON ONLY ONE THING... THE COSMIC WINE!!
STORY THE GROUP OF THIEVES CALLED "LE VIN, WINE BURGLARS" ARE AFTER ONE OF ONLY TWO BOTTLES OF THE COSMIC WINE. THEIR OPERATION AT A PUBLIC PARTY ON A LUXURY OCEAN LINER HAS NOW BEGUN. MARGOT HAS USED HER WILES TO PUT THE GUEST OF HONOR, MR. RAHMAN, TO SLEEP, AND REPLACED HIM WITH MOUTON IN DISGUISE. NOW IT'S LAFITTE'S TURN, DISGUISED AS A CARD DEALER IN THE CASINO...
Le Vin, Wine Burglar



THIS STORY IS FICTIONAL AND COMPLETELY UNRELATED TO REAL PEOPLE, GROUPS, OR EVENTS.

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I HIT HIS HIKOU POINT AND KNOCKED HIM OUT
HIKOU? WHAT DOES THAT
I SEE ...
WELL, SHOW THEM YOUR SKILLS, LAFITTE.
IT'S A COOL JAPAN THING.
OH, YOU MUST NOT HAVE READ HOKUTO NO KEN.
SHF
SHF
SHF
SHF
....
OH MY.
LOOK AT THAT DEALER!
WHAT AMAZING CARD-HANDLING.

PHEW...
IT'S FROM THE SAME DOMAINE, MARC ROY...
...BUT THIS GEVREY CHAMBERTIN IS A VERY RARE PRODUCT INDEED.
MY GLASS IS TOTALLY EMPTY...
SO, SOMMELIER, WILL YOU POUR THAT PECULIAR CUVÉE NEXT, LIKE YOU PROMISED?
WELL, THEN.
ARE YOU ALL READY?
TEAM?
OUI.

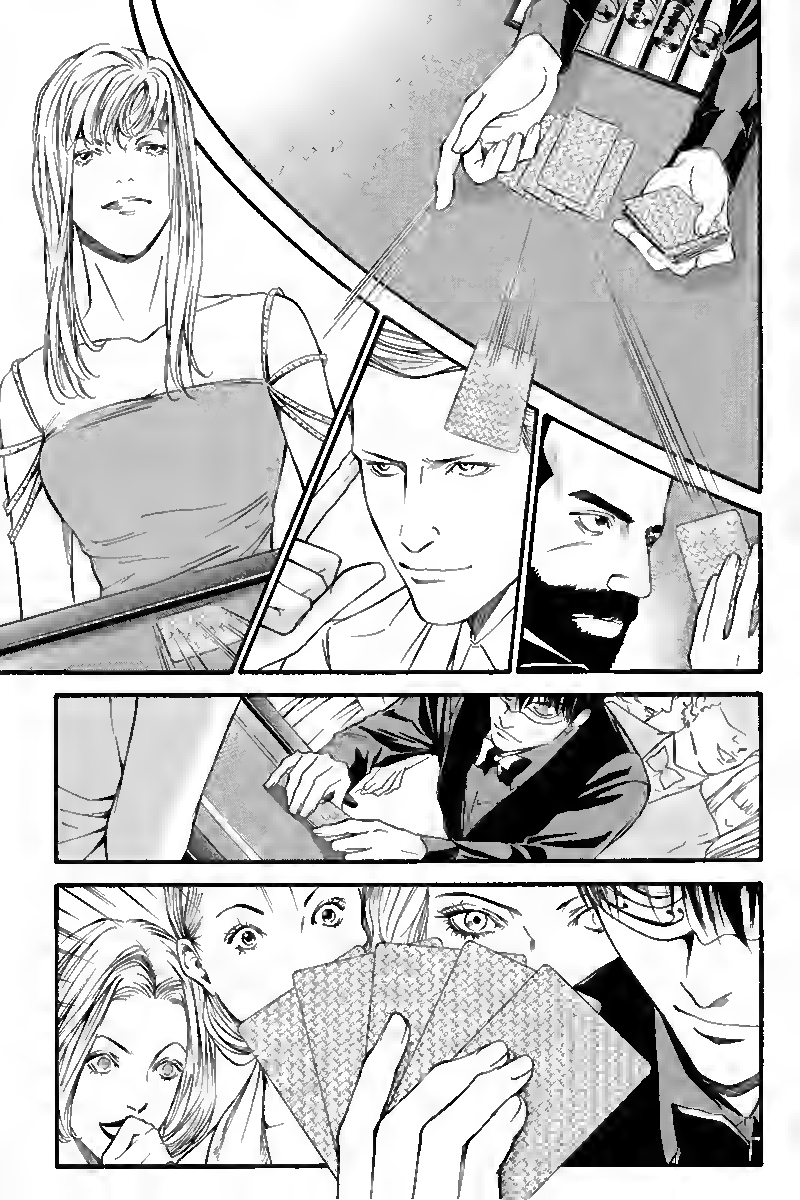
HIS CARD-HANDLING IS GOOD, BUT... HE'S SO SEXY...
HE IS
THAT DEALER IS SO AMA-ZING.
I WANT TO SEE HIS REAL FACE.
SHOOF
SHOOF
SHOOF
SHOOF
SHOOF
YOU'VE CERTAINLY GOTTEN THEIR ATTEN-TION.
AS EXPEC-TED.
HE'S GOT TO BE HANDSOME. HIS GAZE IS SO COOL
OH, MADAME, PLEASE!
...IS JUST BEGIN-NING.
THE REAL SHOW...
I'M SURE YOU'RE QUITE ELATED FROM THE BANQUET...
LADIES AND GENTLE-MEN....

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
...TO BET ON THIS HAND AS WELL.
...SO WHY DON'T WE ALLOW GUESTS WHO AREN'T PLAYING...
IN OTHER WORDS, A POKER GAME IN WHICH FOUR GUESTS WILL PARTICIPATE WITH THE DEALER IN A HAND...AND BEHIND THE PLAYERS...
...THOSE WHO WOULD LIKE TO ENJOY GAMBLING...
...COULD BET THEIR OWN CHIPS ON THE OUTCOME OF THE GAME. IT'S A PARTICULAR STYLE OF PLAY.
SOUNDS FUN.
WHAT DO YOU THINK, HONEY?
HMPH.
JUST AS I EXPECTED FROM A GENIUS ILLUSION-IST.
SURE, IF YOU WANT TO PLAY.
ME TOO.
ME TOO.
I WANT TO TRY.
I THINK I'LL GIVE IT A GO.

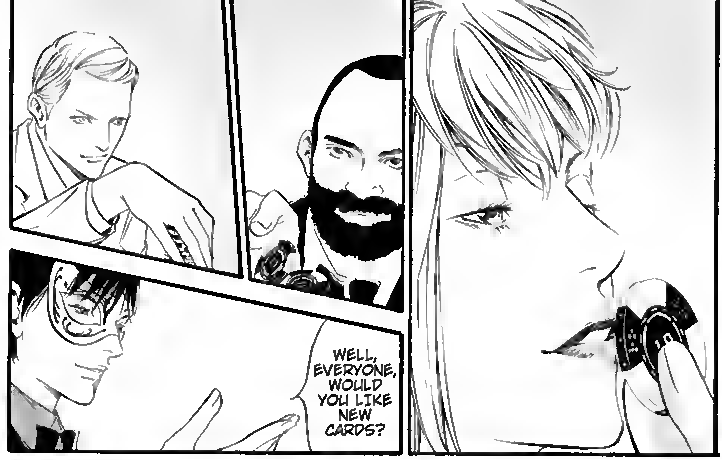
PULLING PEOPLE'S ATTENTION IS YOUR SPECIALTY.
WELL....
YOU HAVE FUN TOO.
LOOKS LIKE LAFITTE'S SHOW HAS STARTED.
THEN IT'S OUR TURN, HUH.
WHERE'S LA-TOUR?
HE'S ALREADY ENTERED THE FACILITY...
...TO HAND OUT OUR FRESH-BAKED BREAD.

LET US BEGIN.
WELL, WE BETTER GET TO OUR POSTS.
WE DON'T HAVE ALL THAT MANY CHANCES, AND FAILURE'S NOT GONNA BE TOLERATED!
TCH.
SOUNDS LIKE HIM.
MARGOT, WHAT'S THAT LAFITTE PLANNING TO DO?
WHO KNOWS? HE WOULDN'T TELL ME, NO MATTER HOW MANY TIMES I ASKED.
...IF YOU KNOW HOW THE TRICK'S GOING TO GO.
HE SAID IT'S NO FUN TO WATCH AN ILLUSION...
WELL, OF COURSE, MADAME.
I LOVE CARD GAMES.
!
CAN I PLAY TOO?

IT'S GOING TO BE QUITE A LARGE GAME, SO PLEASE PREPARE YOUR CHIPS, EVERY-ONE.
I'VE PRE-PARED A NEW DECK.
WHO SHOULD WE BET ON?
WHAT SHOULD WE DO ?
I'M EXCIT-ED.
PWIP
PWIP
PWIP
NOW, THEN.



MY FRIENDS...
...POKER IS A GAME IN WHICH A POKER FACE IS INDIS-PENSABLE.
THAT'S TRUE...
...BUT IT SEEMS THE ONE WITH THE BEST POKER FACE HERE IS THE DEALER.
I'M GOING TO BET ON THE LADY.
OH.
I'M SO HAPPY.

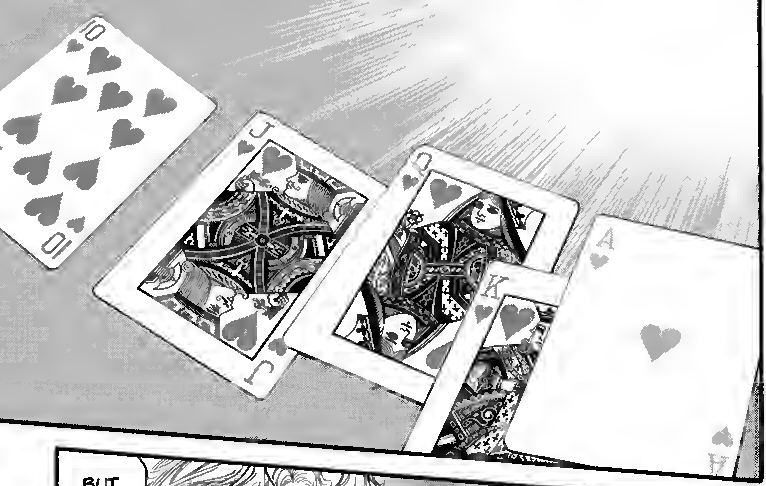

WELL, EVERYONE, WOULD YOU LIKE NEW CARDS?

I'M GOOD.
I AM TOO.
I'M FINE.

THEN I, THE DEALER, WILL SHOW MY HAND FIRST.
VERY WELL.

WOOOAH!
HE'S GOT A ROYAL FLUSH!!
FWIP
NO, NO.
JUST WAIT A MOMENT.
WELL, THAT'S THAT.
HOORAY! LET'S GO DRINK MORE WINE!

WHA ?
IS THAT EVEN POSSI-BLE?
IS THIS A MIRACLE?
THAT'S RIGHT, LAFITTE.
SORRY, BUT MY HAND'S BETTER.

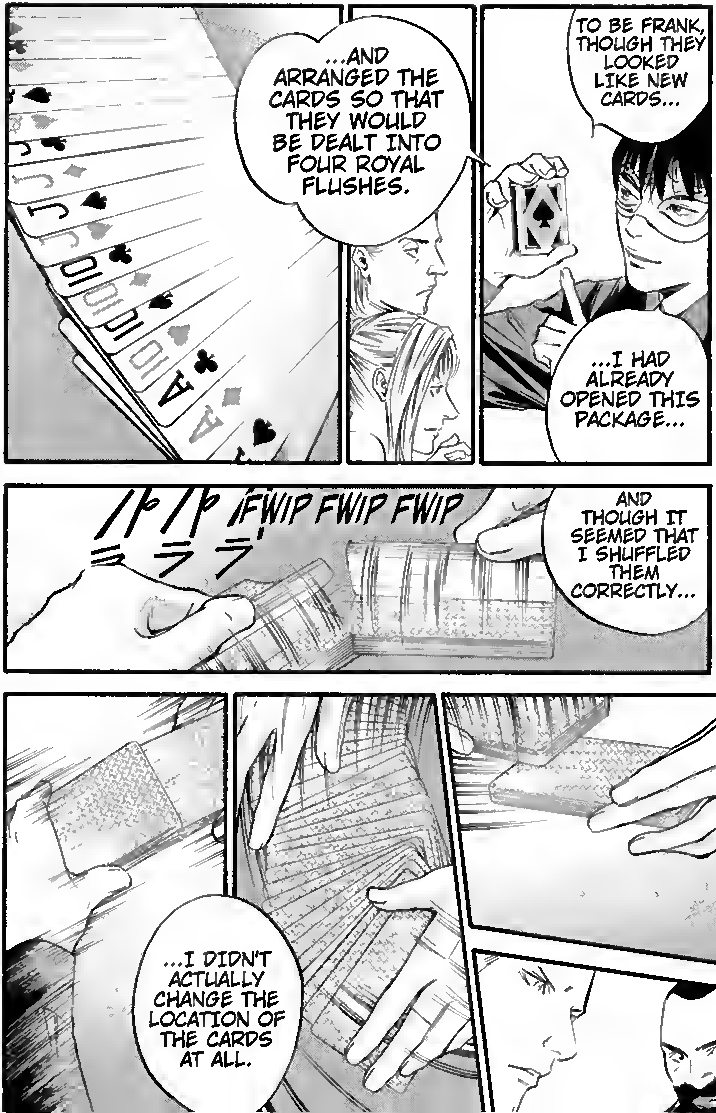


BUT THERE'S ...JUST NO WAY...
WHAT IS WITH THIS GAME...
WOAH ...

PFH. YEAH, RIGHT...
MY APOLO-GIES...
THERE'S ONE MORE PERSON WHO HAS TO REVEAL THEIR HAND.
SOR-RY.
JUST WAIT A MOMENT.

WHAT... WHAT IS THIS?
HUHHH?
LATOUR, MOUTON!
O-KAY.
OUI.

LAFITTE, THERE'S STILL A WOMAN GUARDING THE TARGET WHO HASN'T BEEN DISTRACTED.
COULD YOU TRY ANOTHER PUSH?
OUI.
I'M TERRIBLY SORRY, EVERYONE.
THIS LITTLE GAME WAS JUST A BIT OF FUN.
A LITTLE BIT OF A JOKE, USING MY SLEIGHT OF HAND.
WOW, HE GOT ME.
WHAT'S THAT?
A TRICK?
TELL ME...
YOU TOOK OUT A NEW DECK, AND SHUFFLED THE CARDS SO PAINS-TAKINGLY...
HOW DID YOU DO IT?


...AND ARRANGED THE CARDS SO THAT THEY WOULD BE DEALT INTO FOUR ROYAL FLUSHES.
TO BE FRANK, THOUGH THEY LOOKED LIKE NEW CARDS...
...I HAD ALREADY OPENED THIS PACKAGE...
FWIP FWIP FWIP
AND THOUGH IT SEEMED THAT I SHUFFLED THEM CORRECTLY...
...I DIDN'T ACTUALLY CHANGE THE LOCATION OF THE CARDS AT ALL.

THEY WERE STILL ARRANGED AS THEY WERE BEFORE.
AND I STARTED TO DEAL.
WOW, AWE-SOME!!
SUCH TECHNIQUE !!
COULD YOU SHOW US AGAIN?!
...
IT'S JUST LIKE A MAGIC TRICK.
YOUR HANDS MOVE SO SMOOTH-LY...

NOW.
WILL THEY BE ABLE TO SEIZE IT?
GRAND VIN
LE VIN, WINE BURGLAR MISSION AVEND
THE STORY CONTINUES WITH (THE FINAL STRATEGY)